## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

15. In a computer network enabling communication between a plurality of computers, an update processing and transmission system, said system comprising:

record creation means, for creating a record in response to a commerce-related event;

status information retrieval means for retrieving status information about said commerce-related event;

message generation means for generating a status message reflective of said status information; and

message forwarding means for forwarding said status message to a point where it may be accessed by an interested party.

16. The system of claim 15, wherein said status information relates to shipment of an item specified within said record.

17. The system of claim 15, wherein status information retrieved by said status information retrieval means is contained on a second computer physically remote from a first computer on which said record is stored and accessible via said network.

18. The system of claim 15, wherein said record is stored on a record database within a first computer.

19. The system of claim 15, further comprising a status database for separately storing status information about said record.

-9-

20. In a computer network enabling communication between a plurality of computers, an update processing and transmission method, said method comprising the steps of:

creating a record in response to a commerce-related event;

retrieving status information about said commerce-related event;

generating a status message reflective of said status information; and

forwarding said status message to a point where it may be accessed by an interested party.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein said status information relates to shipment of an item specified within said record.

22. The method of claim 20, wherein status information retrieved is contained on a first computer physically remote from a second computer which stores the record information.

23. The method of claim 20, wherein said record is stored on a record database within a first computer.

24. The method of claim 20, further comprising separately storing status information about said record.